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INDIAN NOTES

FALL 1974 • X NO 4



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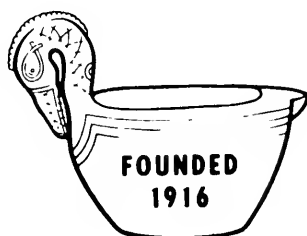


MUSEUM ^{OF} THE AMERICAN INDIAN

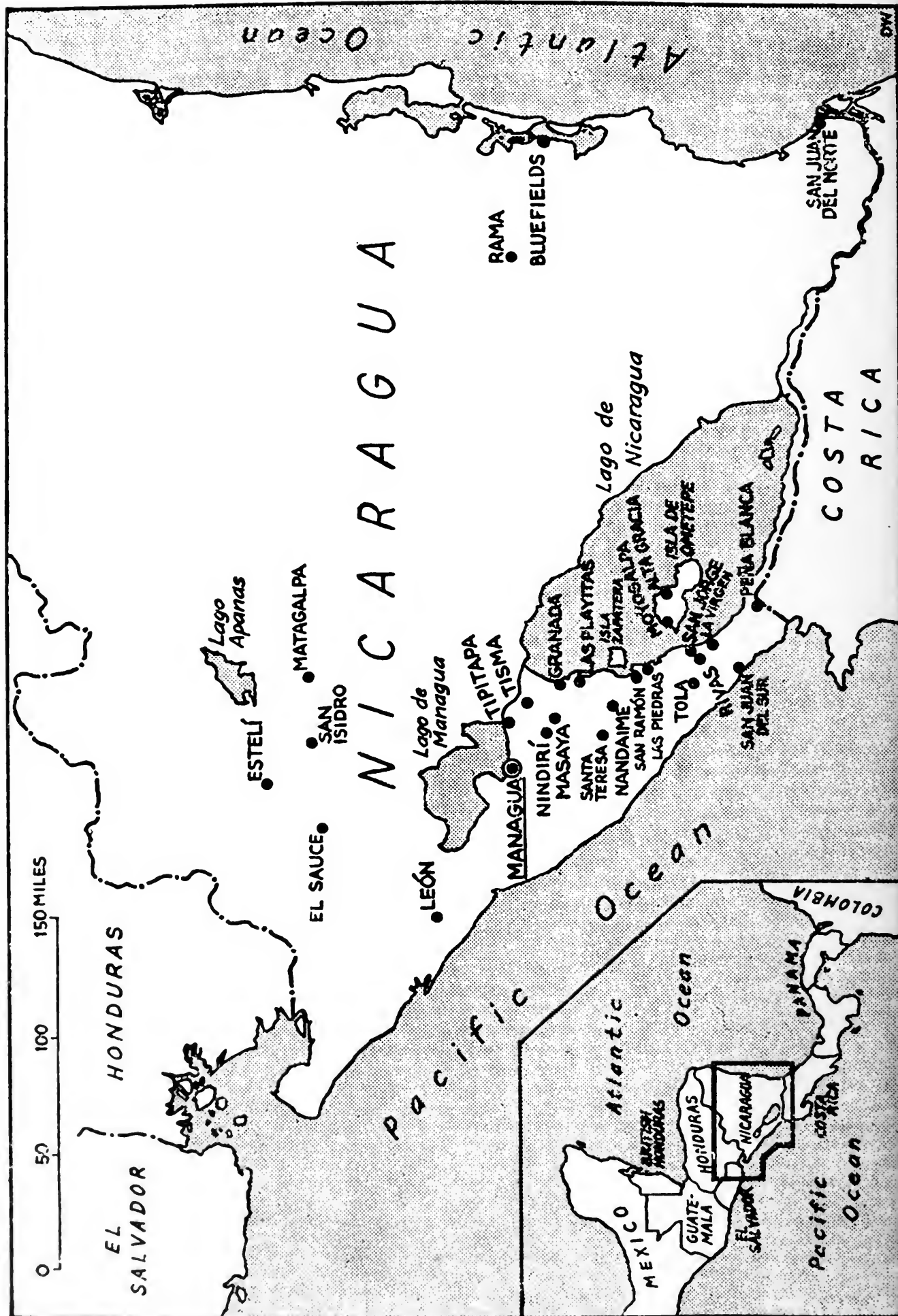
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Betty Borger, *Editor*
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Map 1. Nicaragua

THE NICARAGUA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

A Preliminary Report

Lydia L. Wyckoff

Lydia L. Wyckoff, who directed the Survey, is a Research Associate of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, and is an Adjunct Associate Professor of Art History at the University of New Haven. She is pursuing graduate work in anthropology at Wesleyan University.

Nicaragua, bordered by Honduras to the north and Costa Rica to the south, is shaped like a funnel. It is either through this funnel or along its coast that any cultural diffusion from Mesoamerica to South America, or vice versa, took place. Nicaragua and the other Central American countries are, therefore, of enormous importance archaeologically, not only for their pre-Columbian cultures per se, but also as they add to our knowledge of the cultural history of the more dramatic cultures to the north and south.

Diffusion is known to have taken place. During the Mesoamerican Post Classic period, metallurgy moved from south to north (Caso, 1965). Also, at the close of this period in the Pacific area of Nicaragua, the Late Polychrome period develops. The diagnostic ware of this period is Vallejo polychrome (Fig. 1), characterized by Mixteca-Puebla codex motifs (Wyckoff, 1971). During the Middle Polychrome period (A.D. 800-1200), which would correspond to the Mesoamerican Late Classic through the early Post Classic, the primary diagnostic wares are Papagayo and Pataky polychrome (Fig. 2). These wares are Nicaraguan ceramic types within Lothrop's (1926) general classification "Nicoya polychrome." Nicoya polychrome has been found in Honduras (Stone, 1957), in association with Toltec material in Guatemala (Rands and Smith, 1965), and in the Valley of Mexico at Tula itself (Diehl, Lomas, and Wynn, 1974). The contact between these two areas during the Early Polychrome period (A.D. 400-800) may have continued, and is certainly present during the latter Zoned Bichrome period from 100 B.C. to A.D. 400 (Coe and Baudez, 1961). The problem, then, is not whether diffusion took place between the Pacific area of Nicaragua and Mesoamerica, but by what means — trade, migration, or both — and by what route.

The goals of the Nicaragua Archaeological Survey were twofold. First, since diffusion is known to have taken place, an attempt was made to define the access route between the two areas. Secondly, the survey attempted to delineate the settlement patterns and environmental usage

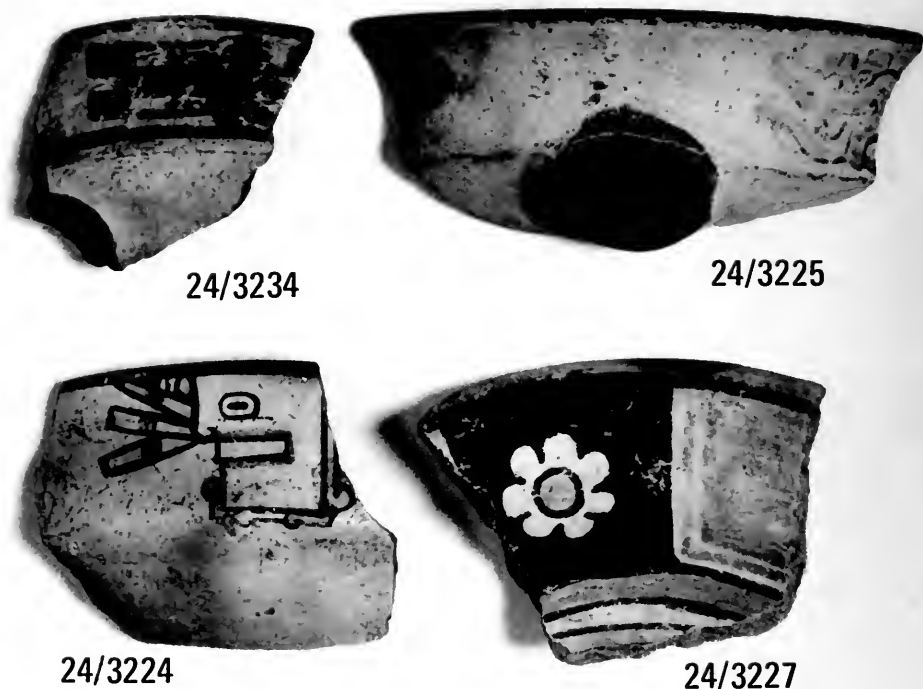


Fig. 1. Pottery rim fragments, Vallejo polychrome, San Francisco phase. San Francisco site, Department of Masaya, Nicaragua. Widest, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ inches

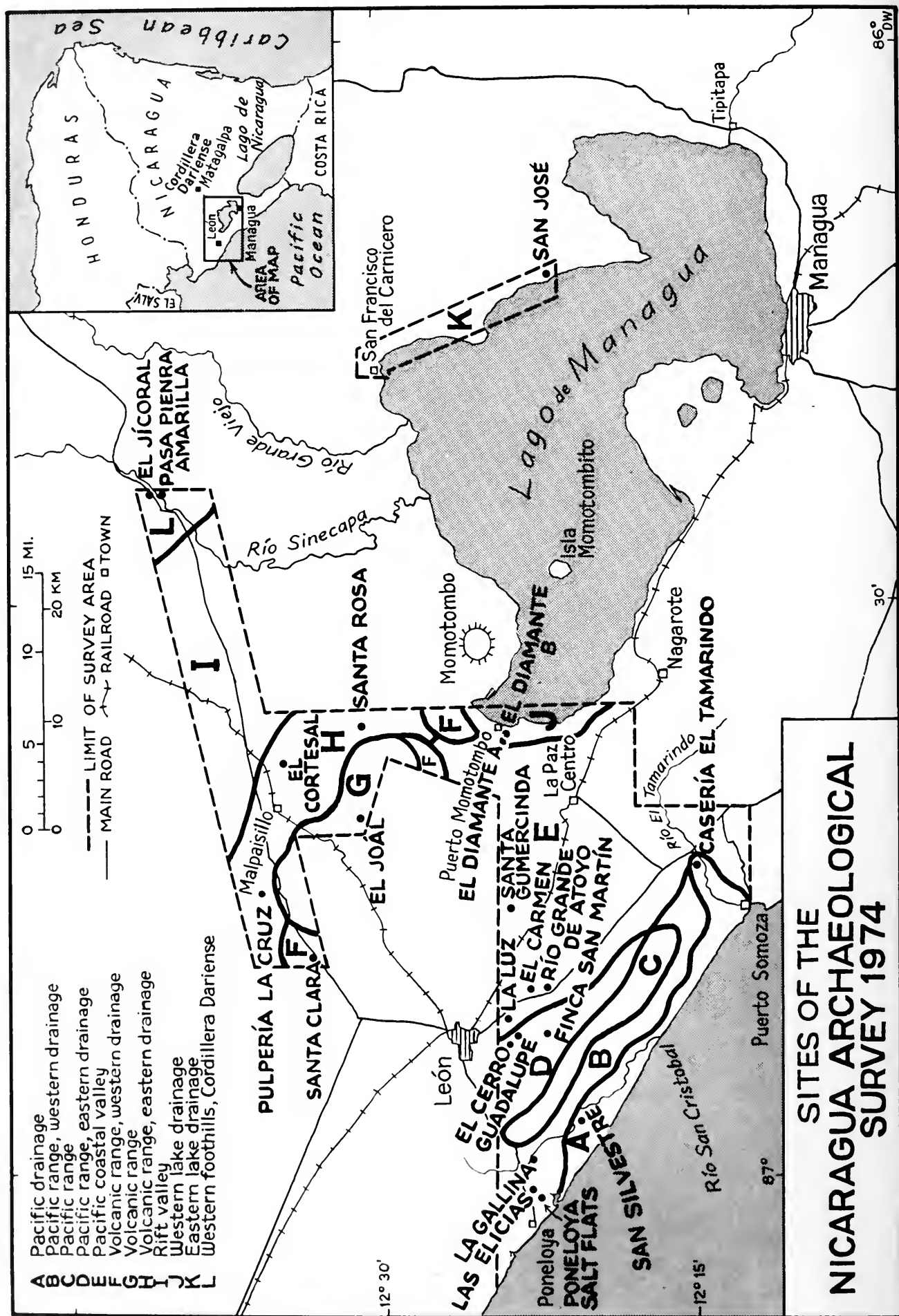
practices of the pre-Columbian peoples of the Pacific area to aid our understanding not only of the peoples themselves but also the degree to which any northern influence may have affected the area.

The survey area (see Map 2) was selected to aid in answering the previously outlined problems. It is a strip extending eastward from the Pacific coast to the foothills of the Cordillera Dariense. The strip follows an irregular course in order to take advantage of the León-Matagalpa road. The survey area should be expanded in the future to include the Sinecapa and Grande Viejo valleys, but this would require a boat.

The survey area is dry from November through April and in late June and July and wet during May, early June, and August through October. The temperature is moderate, ranging from 21.0 to 37.0 degrees Celsius with an average mean of 28.0 (80.5 degrees Fahrenheit). Considering the rainfall, temperature, and elevation, most of this area is subtropical dry and subtropical moist, except for the upper slopes of the volcanic range, which are subtropical wet (Tax Improvement and Natural Resources Inventory Project, 1971). It is useful, however, to distinguish a number of ecologically significant zones within this area (see Map 2). These are, from



Fig. 2. Urn, Pataky polychrome. Lake Nicaragua, Department of Rivas, Nicaragua. (13/6845) 13 inches high



SITES OF THE NICARAGUA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY 1974

Map 2. Nicaragua Archaeological Survey

west to east: Pacific coastal drainage; Pacific coastal range, western drainage; Pacific coastal range; Pacific coastal range, eastern drainage; Pacific coastal valley; volcanic range, western drainage; volcanic range; volcanic range, eastern drainage; rift valley; western lake drainage; eastern lake drainage; and the western foothills of the Cordillera Dariense.

Twenty-two sites were located within the survey area. They were scattered over all eleven ecological zones, except the rift valley and the Pacific range.

Las Elicias, Poneloya Salt Flats, San Silvestre and Casería El Tamarindo were located within the Pacific coastal drainage area. Casería El Tamarindo, the sole site situated on a river, is at the head of the tide and, like the other three sites, is in an area characterized by salt marsh and mangrove swamps, with some small higher areas fit for cultivation. The higher region, classified as Pacific coastal range, western drainage, contained only one site — that of La Gallina. Three sites, El Cerro, Guadalupe, and San Martín, showed evidence of extensive occupation, on the eastern slopes of the Pacific coastal range. Just below, in the Pacific coastal valley, are one large site, La Luz, and three smaller sites, El Carmen, Río Grande de Atoyo, and Santa Gumerinda. In the western drainage of the volcanic range there is only one site, Santa Clara. This is at the western end of a pass between the Pacific valley and the rift valley. The fact that only one site was found in this area may be because very little of the area was included in the survey. Furthermore, most of this area was in the vicinity of Momotombo and therefore has been periodically covered with ash for at least the last 300 years, as this was and still is an active volcano and the prevailing winds are out of the east. Determining to what extent the western drainage was inhabited during pre-Columbian times must await a second field season.

Only one site was located within the volcanic range itself, El Joál. Three sites were found on the eastern slopes of the volcanic range: Pulpería La Cruz, El Cortesal and Santa Rosa. In the western foothills, two sites were located in the valley of the Río Sinecapa: El Jícoral and the smaller site of Pasa Pienra Amarilla. Within the western lake shore drainage El Diamante A and B are located, and, across the lake, San José. Although additional sites may have been overlooked, it should be noted that the overwhelming number of large sites that were located are on the lower reaches of the eastern drainage of both the Pacific and volcanic ranges.

The actual sizes of the sites recorded, and therefore the quantity of material collected, varied enormously. From some sites as few as twenty sherds were collected, along with obsidian chips and blades. Only four small sites lacked obsidian — Las Elicias, Poneloya Salt Flats, Finca San Martín and Pasa Pienra Amarillo. From other sites as many as one thou-

sand sherds were collected. Some of these sites contained clearly definable mounds, as at El Joál, where approximately thirty-five mounds covered a plateau of four to five acres. The site of El Jícoral consists of thirty-four mounds; El Cortesal has fourteen clearly definable mounds; Santa Rosa has five; and Pulpería La Cruz has a number of mounds, of which five were mapped.

Considerable information can be obtained from the ceramic, obsidian, and lithic material collected, and the analysis of this material is now being undertaken and we hope will be completed in the next year. Already, however, this newly collected material is assisting us with the problem of access routes into the area. Coe (1962) has hypothesized that trade was carried out along the Pacific coast. This may have been the case in Costa Rica and Panama; but in Nicaragua there is no evidence for coastwise trade, whereas the survey produced evidence for at least one well-defined interior trade route. Northern influence, as noted during the Middle and Late Polychrome periods, extends along the lake in the Isthmus of Rivas (Norweb, 1964) and is also found near Tisma (Wyckoff, 1971). Within the survey area Papagayo polychrome was found at Pulpería La Cruz, El Cortesal, Santa Rosa, and El Diamante B. Also found at these sites were obsidian chips, and bladelets that were trianguloid or trapezoid in cross section. The trianguloid type was commonly found within the survey area. However, the trapezoid type, which is associated with Guatemala (Kidder, 1947) and British Honduras (Willey, 1965), is rare in the survey area, being found only at El Diamante B and Pulpería La Cruz. In contrast to the interior sites, the sites along the Pacific coast and within the western drainage of the Pacific coastal range in no way indicate Mesoamerican influence.

The second problem with which the Survey was concerned was defining settlement patterns. As previously noted, the most extensive settlement was on the eastern slopes of both the Pacific and volcanic mountain ranges. Contrary to established consensus, there seems to have been an extensive occupation as early as the Early Polychrome period. The ceramic wares particularly diagnostic of this period are Potosi Applique (Fig. 3)*, classified by Lothrop (1926) as "Alligator ware"; Urcuyo White-on-red (Fig. 4); Mosca Black-on-red; and León Punctate (Norweb, 1964). At the

*A nearly complete miniature incensario of this ware was found at El Cortesal. The incense cup is the same shape and decoration as that in the Museum collection. However, the base, although the same shape as that of the Museum's specimen, is, like the cups, decorated with appliquéd nodes. The El Cortesal incensario may or may not have had a lid.



Fig. 3. Incensario with iguana represented on its cover. Potosí appliqué. Ometepe Island, Lake Nicaragua, Department of Rivas. (24/4043) 18 inches high

El Cortesal site sherds of all four of these wares were discovered. The fact that these ceramic types associated with the Early Polychrome period further south were found in such quantity in the survey area raises the question of whether or not this period terminated in this area as early as it did further to the south. That it commenced at about the same time is implied by the stratigraphic position of Early Polychrome material, which follows wares decorated by the multiple brush technique, as found during the Zoned Bichrome period. It will be only upon clarification of the chronology of this area that the settlement patterns and the degree of Mesoamerican influence will be fully understood.

In summary, the Nicaragua Archaeological Survey is providing a clearer understanding of access routes from Mesoamerica into the Pacific region. It is also adding to our knowledge of the pre-Columbian peoples of the area. Further study of this material will produce more information.



Fig. 4. Bowl, Urcuyo White-on-red. Nicaragua. (21/3788) 3 inches high

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to the funding institutions, the Center for Inter-American Relations, New York, and the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York. I am also deeply indebted to the members of the Survey: U. Vincent Wilcox III, Curator, Research Branch of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, who acted as assistant director; Thomas Metcalf, graduate student in geology, Wesleyan University; Valerie Talmage, graduate student in anthropology, University of Pennsylvania; Séverine Faure, a senior at the University of New Haven; and Scott Supraner, a high school senior, who was able to join the Survey thanks to the Explorer's Club of New York, which awarded him an educational fieldwork grant.

I also wish to thank the people of Nicaragua. I am particularly grateful to the following: Hno. Hildeberto Maria, who made it possible for us to

receive on loan the collected material so that our studies could be continued in this country; Sr. Arnolfo Reyes, who let us stay at his hacienda; Dr. Alberto Chamorro B., Padre Alvaro Argüello, Dr. Jaime Incer, and all the other members of the Universidad Centro Americano, who gave us their assistance and time; Jose and Olga Arbizú, who helped us at Casería El Tamarindo; Sr. Juan Ramón Baldizón, the owner of Santa Rosa; and all the other people across whose land we walked.

I would also like to thank Douglas Waugh for the maps included with this article, and Carmelo Guadagno, Staff Photographer of the Museum.

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SITE EXPLORATION:

The Archaeological Survey

U. Vincent Wilcox III

Curator, Research Branch

An archaeological survey is an exploratory venture whose purpose is to systematically locate sites of earlier human activity, map them, and obtain a selective sample of material remains that will be, one hopes, representative of the kinds of activities that once took place. Other than digging an occasional test-pit to have a glimpse of the local stratigraphy, the survey team usually does not excavate but collects the artifacts almost exclusively from the surface.

Although both man and nature have, over the centuries, erased much of the physical evidence of human history, there are almost always clues for the archaeologist. In some areas of the world the clues can be most dramatic: ruined walls and massive stone faces often stand as conclusive evidence of archaeological sites. Unfortunately, these are the exception rather than the rule. In Nicaragua, for instance, the only prehistoric architectural features that have survived their builders are low mounds or platforms of earth, raised to support houses or temples of wood and thatch. The houses have long since gone to dust, and many of the mounds either have been leveled by the cumulative effects of time or have succumbed to progress in the form of the mechanical bulldozer.

In spite of specialized scientific procedures developed in recent years, the most reliable method of locating archaeological sites is discovering artifacts on the surface of the ground. Depending on the location and nature of the site, these objects can come in most any form. In Nicaragua they usually consist of pottery sherds, obsidian flakes and blades, and occasional fragments of other stone tools and implements. Many of these artifacts can be misleading, however. For example, modern Nicaraguan utilitarian pottery is not markedly different from that made much earlier by the Indian. More than once the Nicaragua Archaeological Survey team tentatively surveyed sites that upon closer scrutiny proved to be the refuse heaps of 19th- and 20th-century farmhouses.

Nevertheless, the surface distribution of material remains is the key-stone of the archaeological survey. Depending on local geology and vegetation, early man-made objects hidden below the surface are also likely to be represented, in part, on the surface. Therefore, it is possible not only to locate sites geographically, but also to position them culturally and chronologically on the basis of the surface collections.

For example, a typical Nicaraguan site occupied during the Early and Middle Polychrome periods, and subsequently during colonial times, should contain a stratified sequence of artifacts, with those from the Early Polychrome on the bottom and the colonial specimens at the top. However, unless the earlier and lower materials have been geologically sealed in, by a lava flow, for example, a small proportion of objects should also be on the surface, mingling with the colonial objects. Over time, soil action and water flow, along with insect, animal, and even human activity, will have brought them to the surface.

Boots, blisters, and the occasional mirage notwithstanding, the only truly systematic method of site surveying is to walk over every foot of territory in the region under survey. However, this is not often practical due to limited time and funds, and several procedures may be used to short-cut needless meandering about the countryside. The following four methods were the basis of the Nicaragua Archaeological Survey.

1. *The ecological approach* is the primary means for narrowing down the area to be searched. With a preliminary understanding of the economies of the prehistoric cultures of the region, it is usually possible to



Fig. 1. Salt panning is a modern industry in the area around the Rio Tamarindo in western Nicaragua. In this region of natural salt flats and tidal estuaries, the salt is collected from evaporating bins. Evidence suggests that prehistoric Indians also collected salt on this site in essentially the same manner.

deduce which areas are most likely to have been centers of cultural activity. Factors such as proximity to water, soil conditions, climate, defensive position, possible trade routes, and availability of special resources such as salt or obsidian must all be considered. In essence, the archaeologist must try to second-guess prehistoric man's choice of suitable sites for living and working. By analyzing the Nicaraguan factors, the Survey team were able to delineate a number of discrete eco-cultural zones within which they could expect to find different types of archaeological sites.

2. *Aerial photography* is one of the most useful tools of the survey archaeologist, enabling him to examine far larger areas than he could ever hope to walk across. Modern aerial photography, as undertaken by various geodetic survey organizations, usually involves a number of overlapping, sequential filmstrips oriented to one of the cardinal directions. The overlap of the photos is important — for by examining simultaneously two photographs of the same region taken from different perspectives, one can obtain the illusion of three dimensions. (The old-fashioned stereoscope viewer and the more modern View-Master are designed on this principle.) The three-dimensional illusion is exaggerated, making mountains out of mounds, and canyons out of stream beds, but this exaggeration helps detect possible archaeological features that might otherwise go unnoticed — such as small mounds and depressions, differences in vegetation cover, changes in soil color, and unnatural surface irregularities.

3. *Drainage systems* are the pathways to archaeological sites, and potsherds are the road signs. Natural erosion at the sites sends materials downstream along the drainage system. By searching the streams and arroyos, it is often possible to follow a trail of potsherds and other artifacts upstream until the source site is found.

A modern corollary to the drainage-system approach is the road-cut. In regions where minor roads have been constructed, it is possible to drive along and examine the embankments carefully for evidences of cultural materials. Often it is merely a matter of chance, but a number of fairly large sites in Nicaragua have been discovered in just this manner, probably due to the fact that many modern roads follow aboriginal paths and highways.

4. *Local informants* are a wealth of information of varying reliability about the existence of sites. If strange objects appear on the surface within an area, usually the local people will know about them. The difficulty, of course, is bridging the often immense gap in communication that usually exists between the local farmer and the archaeologist. Not only may language be a barrier, but also the basic value systems of the two cultures may stand in the way. When this is the case, patience on the part of the



Fig. 2. Members of the Nicaragua Archaeological Survey have followed a trail of potsherds along a small arroyo to the probable source of the artifacts. This site will be mapped, photographed, and samples taken. (*Left to right: Séverine Faure, Valerie Talmage, Lydia Wyckoff*)



Fig. 3. This nearly whole pot protrudes from the embankment of a road that cuts through a large archaeological site.



Fig. 4. This family, operating a small *pulpería* (a form of Nicaraguan delicatessen), live on top of a major archaeological site. Since their courtyard was littered with fragments of obsidian tools and prehistoric pottery, they clearly understood what the Survey team was looking for and were very helpful.

archaeologist is important; if his effort is successful, he may gain more knowledge than merely locations of possible sites.

The immediate result of an archaeological survey is a preliminary delineation of aboriginal settlement patterns and the various ecological and cultural ties that existed, not only between sites, but between the sites and their resources. Although it is rare for a survey to recover artifacts of unusual and artistic quality, in terms of the knowledge it gathers with regard to culture and human behavior, the survey is often of inestimable value.

BEADWORK EXHIBIT TO TRAVEL

From April 17 through July 31, 1974, the Museum presented *American Indian Beadwork* as one of our temporary exhibits. Organized by Mrs. Susan Krause-Martin, Curator of Exhibits, it proved to be highly popular and was extended for a brief period.

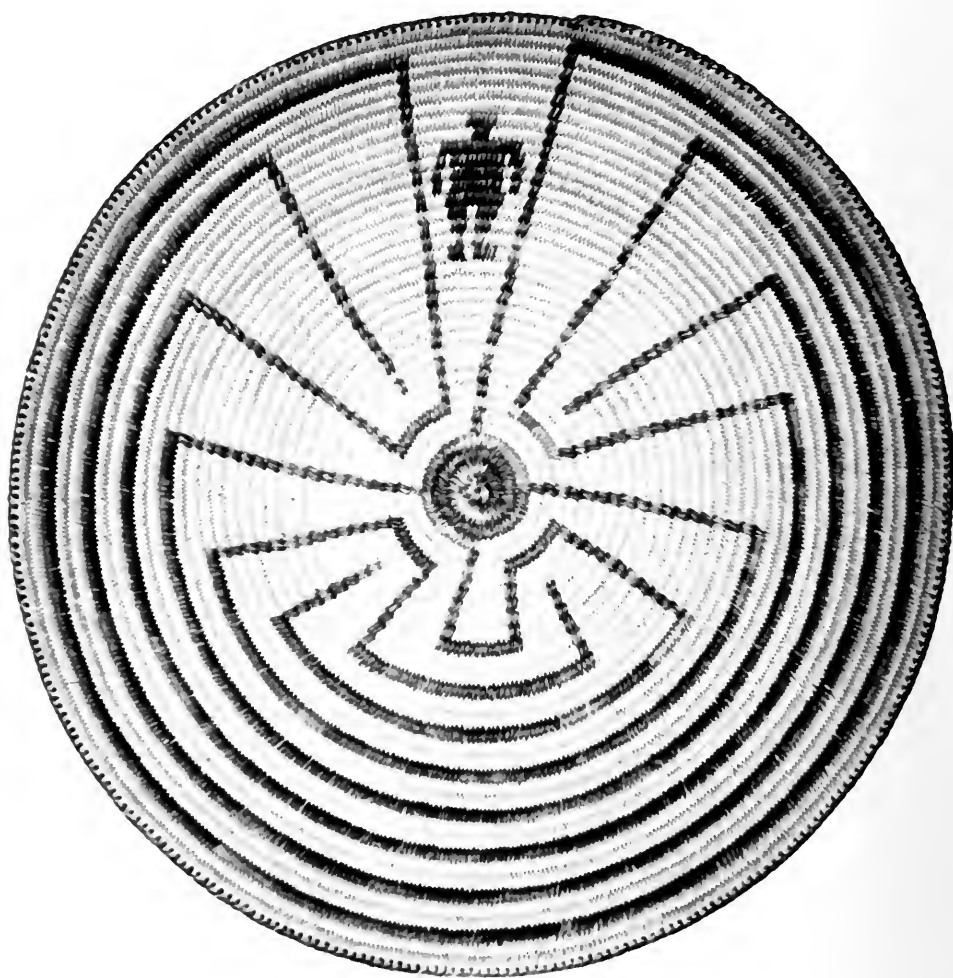
We were subsequently requested by the American Federation of Arts to allow it to travel under their auspices as one of their regularly scheduled loan exhibitions. Because of their excellent record in handling such shows, making them available throughout the United States in a manner far more effective than we could undertake, together with our desire to share our collection with other museums, we have agreed to this proposal with extreme pleasure.

Under the combined efforts of Mrs. Krause-Martin, Miss G. Lynette Miller, and Dr. Dockstader, the exhibit has been reorganized to expand the selection from the original 68 specimens to 125 examples drawn from our collections. Scheduled to begin its two-year tour in September 1975, this exhibit will accompany the publication of a reprint edition of William C. Orchard's classic study *Beads and Beadwork of the American Indians*, which is due from the printer this fall.

We are proud to collaborate with the AFA in this effort, and we are confident that the exhibition will enjoy a warm welcome wherever it is shown. All inquiries concerning *American Indian Beadwork* should be directed to the American Federation of Arts, 41 East 65th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021.

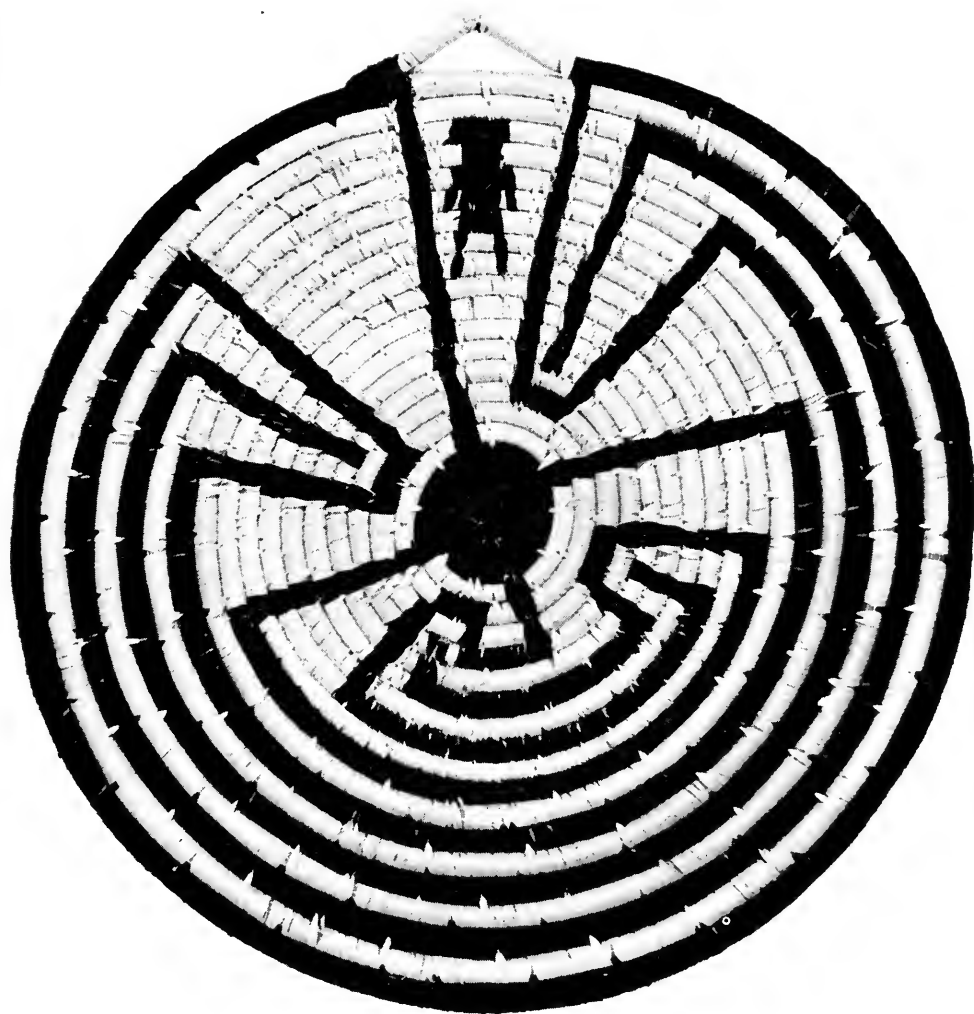
THE FURTHER TRAVELS OF SIUHÜ

The Pima people tell of Siuhü, a mythological figure whose home is so deep in the interior mountain area of their land that trails become confused, and no one can follow him. As a remembrance of this legend, plaques and bowl-shaped baskets are frequently woven with a maze pattern which has become a standard Pima design. This is called *Siuhü Ki* – the home of Siuhü – depicting the legendary figure standing at the entrance of the trail to his remote home. The example illustrated below was collected by John V. Lawrence.



PIMA, circa 1920
Sacatón, Arizona
(23/761) D: 10 inches

KOASATI, circa 1971
Elton, Louisiana
(24/6721) D: 14 inches



Recently, while visiting in New Orleans, we noticed a raffia plaque with this design in a local Indian crafts shop, but the plaque was obviously not of Pima origin. Upon inquiry, it proved to be of Coushatta (Koasati) manufacture, made by Lois Langley of Elton, Louisiana. The adaptation of this design intrigued us so much that it was purchased for the Museum Collection as an example of how designs travel from one tribe to another — a faithful replica, about 1500 miles from home, and a future headache to ethnologists of the 21st century.

— Frederick J. Dockstader

A POSSIBLE USE FOR A MAYAN SHELL ORNAMENT

Robert T. Hatt

Cranbrook Institute of Science

Diego de Landa, Bishop of Yucatan in the early sixteenth century, reported (1941: 106) that little Mayan girls in that time wore a thin cord about their loins to which was attached a small shell covering their sexual parts. In the indigenous baptismal service that took place anytime from their third to twelfth year, the shell, a sign of chastity, was abandoned and thereafter the girls were free to marry at the pleasure of their parents.

The shell of an Atlantic Thorny Oyster (*Spondylus americanus* Hermann), recovered in the course of my excavations in the hill caves of Yucatan, may well have served as such a *cache-sex*. This shell, 60 mm. in width, had been drilled to produce two holes below the hinge line, as for a neck pendant; but there are also two holes, closer together, near the lower margin. A well-worn groove in the outer surface extends between the upper pair of holes. The edges of the shell and the surfaces, particularly the inner one, have been carefully smoothed.

The shell would have been suspended by a cord passing between the upper holes along the groove on its outer surface and then encircling the body above the hips. Another cord — strung through the lower holes, its two ends then passing between the legs and drawn upward to tie onto the encircling line — would have completed a harness to position the shell over the genitalia of a small girl, as suggested in Figs. 1 and 2.

Shells found near the pelvises of adults unearthed at Zaculeu (Woodbury and Trik, 1953: 83, 95) seem unlikely to have served as sex masks during life, for drilling of these particular shells was not reported, nor was sex identification given for the skeletons.

The shell here reported is from Actun Ix-kix, Hacienda Calcehtok. This is a fault cave in which there has been enlargement through solution, though it is relatively dry and there are few stalactites or stalagmites to indicate long-continuing water drip. A dressed limestone block, partially hollowed on the uppermost surface, was evidently an unfinished water catcher of a type common in the caves. It bore no lime incrustation and apparently had not been used. Many caves in these hills have their floors littered with potsherds, evidence of frequent use and the hazards of carrying out pots of water collected there; but in Actun Ix-kix there were few sherds, and those found were, on the average, larger in size than sherds in caves more frequently visited for water.



Fig. 1. The drilled *Spondylus* shell from Ix-kix Cave, Yucatan, threaded as grooving indicates it would have been if used as a *cache-sex*. External surface.

Fig. 2. The same; internal surface.



The cave, according to local report, had been but recently rediscovered. A 1935 date had been smoked onto one wall, and A. S. Pearse (1938) reports visiting it in 1936. Potsherds which I brought out were dated by Brainerd (in Hatt *et al.*, 1953: 112) as from the Early Classic period to that of the Mexican occupation (A.D. 200-1000).

The shell was found under a thin deposit of cave dust at the foot of a steep declivity leading to a lower unexplored passage. No human bones were associated with the find. It is incorporated into the collections of Cranbrook Institute of Science, where it bears the number An-4500.

I am indebted to Robert N. Bowen, Director of the Institute, for the photographs reproduced on page 117.

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MATTIE GRINNELL

Mrs. Mattie Grinnell, the last full-blooded member of the Mandan Indian tribe, died January 6 in Twin Buttes, North Dakota. She was 108 years old. Living through more than a century of tremendous change for her people and her land, Mrs. Grinnell retained to the end her vitality, charm, and spirit. She had her own theory on her longevity: "I still use Indian medicine. That's why I'm over 100 years old."

She was born at Like-A-Fish-Hook village on the Fort Berthold Reservation one year after the Civil War. She had only four years of formal schooling, dropping out to help with the work at home when her father became ill. She believed that education is very important for the young, but felt that her people should make more use of what they have been taught by tradition, and she had a great appreciation for her own Indian heritage. She knew the religious ceremonies, dances, and legends — and was, she asserted, the only one who knew how to prepare the corn balls and sun-dried meat used in tribal ceremonies.

Mrs. Grinnell remained actively involved in the world around her. In 1968, at the age of 101, she took part in the Poor People's March on Washington. She tended a large garden every summer and took great pride in having "the cleanest garden around Twin Buttes."

Mrs. Grinnell was married twice. Her first husband, John Nagel, was a German immigrant farmer who had served with the Third Regiment of the Missouri Volunteer Cavalry from 1861 to 1864. He died in 1904. Her marriage to Charles Grinnell in 1907 ended in divorce in 1935. She is survived by four children, all from her first marriage (three children from her second marriage are now deceased), 40 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren, and 5 great, great-grandchildren. We extend our sincere condolences to her family.

SARAIN STUMP

It is with sadness that we note the passing of Sarain Stump, a gifted young poet and artist, who drowned while visiting Mexico this winter. He is perhaps best known for *There Is My People Sleeping*, a selection of his poems which he also illustrated. He was a Cree-Shoshoni from the Wind River country in Canada.

THREE MAJOR GIFTS RECEIVED

The Museum is grateful to acknowledge three remarkable gifts that have been received during the past year, each of which is outstanding in its field and adds measurably to our collections.



Stone bead with human face carved on two sides.
Collected by James R. Coates.
Princess Anne County, Virginia
(20/231) 1 inch long.



The *James R. Coates Collection* of Atlantic coastal archeology, mainly from Virginia and Maryland, was collected by Mr. Coates personally over a period of approximately fifty years. This large collection represents a rich variety of stone artifacts from Indians of that area. It is accompanied by excellent site data and will dramatically increase our collections from that eastern prehistoric era. In addition to the prehistoric material there is a small group of ethnological objects; notable among these is the unique turkey feather cape on the opposite page.



Turkey feather cape, circa 1940. Mataponi. Palls, Virginia.
(21/3594) 24 x 48 inches.

This magnificent cape, interwoven of wild turkey feathers, was made by Mrs. Molly Adams, a member of the Mataponi tribe, of Palls, Virginia. It is a faithful replica, in form and technique, of the early examples of similar garments made by the Indians of the Virginia area, as reported in 17th-century journals. Unfortunately, none of these early examples have survived, although they were apparently very common when the English colonists first arrived. This cape, which was loaned to the Museum in 1949, has just been transferred to a permanent gift by Mr. James R. Coates of Norfolk, Virginia. We are deeply grateful to him for this thoughtful generosity.

Much of the collection of *Mrs. Anico Surany de Benjamin* of California was acquired by her father, John Surany, and herself from about 1940 to 1970. At her death, the collection was given to the Museum in her memory by her sister, Mrs. John J. O'Connor. The collection is primarily from Panama and Costa Rica and includes several outstanding examples of




Large stone slab with deeply carved designs, excavated by John Surany in Mexico, 1964. From the collection of Mrs. Anico Surany de Benjamin.
(24/9370) 18 x 7½ x 4 inches.



Left and right sides of carved stone illustrated on page 122.

primitive art that are among the finest we have acquired in recent years. Mrs. Benjamin was a valued friend of the Museum, and we deeply regret her passing; it is a pleasure tinged with sadness to add this fine collection to the Museum's holdings.



24/9156

24/9160

24/9222

24/9164

24/9155

The *Merrin-Lindenbaum Collection*, consisting of 120 wooden masks made in Mexico from about 1850 to 1950, was originally deposited on loan from Vivian S. Merrin and Samuel H. Lindenbaum. Selections from the collection, together with a few earlier examples from the Museum's own collections, formed the basis of a special exhibition of *Mexican Masks*, which opened in October 1974. The exhibit, a colorful and dramatic combination of the many influences in both early and modern expressions of the masking concept, has attracted so much interest that its original closing date was extended until April 1975. Five outstanding examples from this gift are illustrated above. We are tremendously grateful to add this fine material to the Museum's permanent collections.

TWO NEW REPRINTS

CROW INDIAN MEDICINE BUNDLES

by William Wildschut and John C. Ewers

A reprint of the original book published in 1960, this definitive volume is based upon field work by William Wildschut among the Crow Indians from 1917 to 1928, and the specimens which he collected for the Museum. Dr. Ewers has edited the manuscript, and drawn from his own thorough knowledge of the Crow people to make this an extremely useful book.

CONTRIBUTIONS, VOL. XVII

178 pages

72 plates, 4 in color

1974

\$10.00 paper

by mail, add 50¢ postage

ZUNI BREADSTUFF

by Frank Hamilton Cushing

Based upon fieldwork undertaken from 1879 to 1884, this classic study was published as a one-volume *Monograph* by the Museum in 1920. It quickly went out of print, and has long commanded a premium in the rare-book market. It is not an "Indian cookbook" — rather, it examines various Pueblo foods and their preparation, most particularly corn, the mother food, and its impact on Zuni life and social custom.

MISCELLANEOUS SERIES, VOL. VIII

673 pages

illustrated

1974

\$10.00 paper

by mail, add 25¢ postage

George Carter a lawyer
 of the ...
 Jan 17 1880

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John H. ...

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

A Catlin Letter

The Museum Archives contain a wide variety of valuable resources, including letters, field notes, documents and manuscripts. In the wish to make these more available, the following letter from George Catlin, the famous painter of Indian subjects, will be of interest. Although it is strictly a business communication and is not especially important to us for its content, it does reveal the continuing financial troubles which beset Catlin throughout his life.

George Catlin in behalf
of Mr. M. Matthews
Jany. 4/40

John W. Mitchell, Esq.
Cedar Street

Dear Sir:

I have received your note in relation to the levy on Mrs. Green's furniture.

I regret that such a thing has happened and would not have allowed it had there been funds in my hands to discharge the amount due.

As it is I am already more than \$100 in advance for Mr. Matthews and have not the power to make any [more?].

I will write him by todays mail upon the subject and will inform you of the receipt of his answer.

Yours [vt?]

Jany. 4, 1840

George Catlin



TEHUELCHÉ.
Patagonia, Argentina.
(24/7495)
49 x 61 inches

PAINTED HIDE COAT

Recently the Museum acquired an extremely rare costume from South America, of which less than half a dozen examples are known to have survived. These cumbersome garments were made by the Indians of Patagonia and consist of seven horse-hide layers sewn together and painted with a yellow vertical stripe bordered in black on a light red-brown base. They served not only as body protection against the bitter cold of the area, but were also used as armor in battle. These were sometimes called a "Robe of Dignity," since they were apparently extremely valuable even at the time of their manufacture. This was collected in 1832 by President Juan Manuel Rosas of Argentina.

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